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Corns, Christine and Tipi, Nicoleta S.

2010 LRN Conference report

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AUTHORS
Christine Corns
Dr Nicoleta Tipi

This year's LRN conference, held at the Majestic Hotel in Harrogate and hosted by the Institute of Transport at Leeds University

2010 LRN Conference

- This year's LRN conference, held at the Majestic Hotel in Harrogate and hosted by the Institute of Transport at Leeds University, again proved the breadth and scope of research being undertaken within the field of logistics and the supply chain and had a particularly international flavour.

Speakers, many of whom were well-established names but also many relatively new to the event, presented evidence of strong research, innovation and new thinking on a broad range of topics around the main theme of: *Towards a sustainable supply chain: balancing the needs of business, economy and the environment.*

A warm welcome was presented by Dr Tony Whiteing MILT and Professor Mark Wardman, University of Leeds Institute for Transport Studies.

Three plenary sessions were set for each day, with presentations on urban transport, water freight and rail freight providing valuable examples from these three modes of transport. Attention was given to most modes of transport during the conference, but air transport is to receive further consideration from a research point of view.

Plenary keynote speakers

Steve Steele CMILT, Freight and Fleet Programme Manager, Transport for London

Steve Steele's presentation was geared around particular lessons learned from urban transportation in the London area by looking at improving delivery and

servicing efficiency with the emphasis on the role of the customer and local authority.

He considered whether sustainable urban transport is even possible, what has been done so far, by whom and what a sustainable supply chain looks like. He outlined the urban freight challenges facing London, which include: the size of the shops and frequency of deliveries; the conflict between loading, servicing and other road-users; and unco-ordinated home deliveries creating an excess of users on the city's roads. He identified that there is a need for changes to current practice and behaviour if progress is to be made.

TfL has been proactive in undertaking research to develop processes and provide guidance to influence behavioural change, and creating systems to assist companies in becoming more efficient and environmentally sustainable. Different case studies were used to understand issues and to show how these differed between organisations. The investigation of real-world applications helped to address the problems facing today's society.

TfL developed the Delivery and Servicing Plan (DSP), which aims to manage vehicle movements, minimise

environmental impact, improve the safety and reliability of deliveries, change current practices and behaviour, and identify current problems within the urban freight environment. It has been proven to help cut congestion on London's roads and shown that goods and services can be delivered in a safe and efficient way where waste can be removed. This approach appears to be a valuable tool that helps practitioners to plan more sustainable modes of transport and to reduce the impact on freight activities in an urban area.

Peter Ward MILT, Executive Director, Freight by Water

Peter Ward delivered a thoroughly engaging presentation on changing the perception and creating new thinking in the use of water as a viable means of freight transport: *Challenges and opportunities of water freight as a key component of sustainable supply chains*. Freight by Water is a not-for-profit trade association that represents the interests of the water freight industry and promotes the use of short-sea shipping, coastal shipping and inland waterways for the transport of freight.

The issue of modal shift has been on the agenda for several years, but this has mainly focused on moving freight from road to rail. The potential for using water in freight transportation is now being recognised. Peter Ward explained that as a mode of transport water can offer a sustainable and profitable opportunity for companies, particularly in view of the difficulties facing road transport – for example, increasing price of oil, devalued UK currency and escalating fuel duties. For many years, up until the early 1970s, oil was a readily available source of fuel and therefore fuel costs remained fairly constant. Since then we have witnessed an ever-increasing rise costs, which has forced businesses to consider fuel usage in their business planning. This can only continue, hence alternatives must be considered.

The opportunities for modal shift to water exist in the 3,500+ miles of UK coastline, 100+ ports around the UK coast and 2,000+ miles of inland waterways. A 1,000t coaster is equivalent to 40 lorry loads. Several UK supermarket chains have already seized on the opportunities offered – for example, Sainsbury's transports from its DC in East London to its Wandsworth store by inland waterway and Tesco's imported wine from South America is shipped in bulk along the Manchester Ship Canal to the bottling plant.

Some of the key challenges facing the waterways industry are its current fragmented structure, the negative market perception and the fact that there is no defined product on offer. Modal shift must be demand driven, which is where Freight by Water comes in. Through a series of modal shift forums aimed at stakeholders and end-users, Freight by Water is aiming to encourage a more proactive interaction. It recognises that collaboration is the key to success, which includes national and local government agencies, trade associations, importers, exporters and service providers.

Further information, web site: www.freightbywater.org



John Howell, Rail Development Manager, W H Malcolm

John Howell spoke about the ongoing move to rail freight. Over the last 10 years the UK has seen a rise in intermodal traffic, with a shift towards the use of rail by many major retailers – for example, ASDA. The rail share of UK freight has risen from 8% to 11%, with an expected 20% increase by 2025.

So what has changed? John Howell outlined the new rail operations that have been established in recent years that have sought to bring a new culture to the old rail industry. Revenue support grants have been introduced and service levels increased. The carbon agenda has encouraged the greater use of freight by rail, with an estimated 70% carbon saving made by rail over road. With the issues of road congestion, the perception of rail is becoming more favourable to retailers, added to that the increasing number of rail freight terminals, it is now easier to access the rail system.

However, there are limitations. The rail industry does not currently offer a comprehensive service and there is a lack of co-operation between operators. Difficulties in creating full train loads impact on the cost effectiveness of the services offered. These problems can be overcome by aggregating loads through improved customer/operator collaboration. A role exists for 4PLs

Conference organiser Dr Tony Whiteing summed up the feel of this year's conference, saying it held the usual 'LRN buzz', with a great deal of friendly discussion between sessions



Steve Steele, Freight and Fleet Programme Manager, Transport for London

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The Undergraduate Award was presented to Charlotte Laval, University of Huddersfield, for: A case study of Miller Brands UK and Wincanton plc



Peter Ward, Executive Director, Freight by Water

to provide new solutions by bringing parties together and creating synergies. Despite the competitive pressures, operator co-operation, does exist with the likes of DB Schenker and Direct Rail Services Ltd (DRS) sharing trainloads for oil traffic.

Future rail development will depend on an enhanced rail infrastructure, including more urban distribution hubs at rail terminals, a network of intermodal terminals, and rail links between DCs and customers. Potential also exists for the use of large passenger railway stations for urban deliveries.

Conference dinner LRN Dissertation Awards

The 2010 Dissertation of the Year Awards were presented by Sir Moir Lockhead FCILT.

The Undergraduate Award was presented to Charlotte Laval, University of Huddersfield, for: A case study of Miller Brands UK and Wincanton plc.

The Masters Award was presented to Sebastian Stanger, Cranfield University, for: Reducing wastage in the blood supply chain.

The PhD Award, The James Cooper Memorial Cup, was presented to Pietro Evangelista, Heriot-Watt University, for: *Dissemination of information and communication technology (ICT) in supply chain management: the impact on small and medium sized transport and logistics service providers*, by Professor Mike Browne, University of Westminster and LRN Chairman.

The Freight Best Practice Student of the Year Award was presented to Lena Von Fritschen, graduate of Heriot-Watt University, by Dawn Fisher MILT, formerly Senior Consultant, AECOM.

Sir Moir Lockhead talked about the need to encourage more people to substitute public transport for their own car journeys in order to reduce CO₂



John Howell, Rail Development Manager, W H Malcolm



An area of concern emphasised by Sir Moir Lockhead at the LRN Dissertation Awards was the reducing number of university places for students, with an estimated 86,000 students missing out on a place this year

emissions. Simply by removing one car journey a month, the travelling public could make a significant impact on the annual UK emissions output and contribute positively towards a cleaner and greener future.

Another area of concern emphasised by him was the reducing number of university places for students, with an estimated 86,000 students missing out on a place this year. This potentially reduces the pool of educated graduates in many fields, including transport and logistics, who are imperative to the future of our country's businesses. Sir Moir Lockhead is keen to lobby government to raise the cap on university admissions.

Closing session

Conference organiser Dr Tony Whiteing summed up the feel of this year's conference, saying it held the usual 'LRN buzz', with a great deal of friendly discussion between

sessions. He explained that he had been impressed by the wide range of good research and collaboration between individuals and universities, and research from not only the old hands, but also those that are up and coming.

The PhD workshop run at the start of the conference proved once again to be a real success among students and organisers. The Best Conference Paper was awarded to Claudia Colicchia, Fabrizio Dallari and Marco Melacini, for: *Risk management strategies in a global sourcing process*.

Mike Browne FCILT expressed his thanks to Christine Rowat, who had unfortunately been unable to attend the conference this year. He paid tribute to her hard work in planning and preparing for the conference over many years, and sent her best wishes on behalf of the conference organisers and delegates.



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The PhD Award, The James Cooper Memorial Cup, was presented to Pietro Evangelista (left), Heriot-Watt University by Professor Mike Browne, University of Westminster and LRN Chairman



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Further information

Next year's LRN Conference will be held from 7th to 9th September 2011 and will be organised by the University of Southampton. More details will be appearing soon in *Focus* and on the Institute's web site: www.ciltuk.org.uk